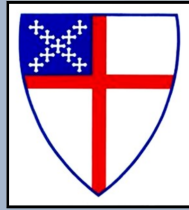


# *The Builder*

**Making Disciples for Jesus Christ**

St. Thomas's Episcopal Church  
(540) 672-3761  
Rector: Pastor Kyle Bomar



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Vol. XLI

**December 2023—February 2024**

Issue No. 5

## **From the Pastor**

Dear ones,

When I first interviewed for the position of Priest in charge here at St. Thomas, one of the initial themes that came out of the conversations was the gift and opportunity we had to learn together. Although I have over 5 years of pastoral ministry and 12 of ministry being on staff at various churches, I'm relatively new to being an Episcopalian. I would ask the folks on the discernment committee to tell me about who St. Thomas was as a church, and the answer was clear: the church had entered a season of rediscovery. We could learn together what it meant for us to live out our Episcopalian identity. "This could be a lot of fun," I thought. It has been. And it will be.

This coming year we will continue to learn together as we listen for God's continued call on our lives as a church. We know from the discernment committee work and the listening sessions that we will focus our efforts on strengthening four core areas of ministry. Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship, and Outreach. In all these areas, we'll be growing together as we reestablish committees to help run and improve these areas. In the coming months, we'll be learning to pray together, offering more learning and worship opportunities, and giving our energy to connect with one another as the church. This will include more in-person and online programming to try and meet people in the ways we can. It will also mean opening our doors to our neighbors in new ways. I am proud of our Vestry for deciding to move forward in support of the Orange community lunch called Come to the Table. Hosting this ministry will mean feeding folks who are hungry and working with friends from other churches to foster fellowship and hospitality in Orange.

Let's keep learning and let us put our roots down deep. "I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." - Ephesians 3

KB+

## St. Thomas Quarterly Calendar

### December 2023

- 1 Madison Choral Society Concert 7 pm  
2 Orange Christmas parade - Join us for Coco out front 4-6 pm  
7 Vestry meeting and Christmas party 5:30 pm  
12 Messiah Sing at 7:30 pm.  
21 Greening of the Church - Bring your greens and help decorate the church 9-noon  
22 Movie Night, 7pm, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*  
24 Advent 4 - services 8 and 10:15 am  
Christmas Eve - Family pageant service at 5 pm & Midnight Mass at 11 pm  
**Projects:**    ☐ Poinsettias ordered  
                  ☐ Christmas mission project - Angel Tree  
                  ☐ Annual flower calendar

### January 2024

- 6 Epiphany service with activities for families 5:30 pm (online - Zoom)  
7 Baptism of our Lord - Renewal of baptismal vows at 8 and 10:15 am services  
21 St. Thomas Annual Meeting following the 10:15 service  
Discernment Committee report and recommendation presented  
21 Music Society concert - Ekhart Ensemble 4 pm  
26 Movie Night, 7pm, *Golda*  
28 Safety Team Meeting following the 10:15 service (address security, health, and safety Q's)  
**Projects:**    ☐ New Vestry Commission  
                  ☐ Winter book Study - led by pastor Kyle  
                  ☐ Food Drive  
                  ☐ School Supplies drive

### February 2024

- 13 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5:30 pm  
14 Ash Wednesday service at Orange Presbyterian Church at noon  
14 Wednesday Lenten program: Evening Prayer at 5:45 pm (also Feb. 21,28)  
Potluck Dinner at 6 pm  
Study at 6:30 pm  
15 Thursday Lenten program: Stations of the Cross 5:30 pm (also Feb. 22,29)  
21 Community Lenten Lunch begins at Orange Presbyterian at noon (also Feb. 21,28)  
23 Movie Night, 7pm, Jules  
**Projects:**    ☐ Order Easter Lilys

## Worship

### Call for Lay Leadership

One of the major themes that came out of the Holy Cow consulting and the listening sessions is that our church needs to refocus our attention on equipping lay leadership. In the coming year, we are hoping to strengthen the lay leadership of the church in a few crucial ways. We have three Vestry positions opening up in January. Vestry meets monthly and helps determine how the programming of the church is to be done. Alongside these positions, we hope to see four ministry committees take new forms around Discipleship, Worship, Fellowship, and Outreach. These core ministry committees will help us plan and implement the programming of our church in these areas. They will offer structure to the rhythm of the year, recruit volunteers for programming, and ultimately propose what programs happen in the church and the budgets that support them. One way to think of this renewal in leadership is that the committees will help propose ***what we do as a church***, while the Vestry will continue to manage ***how we do them***.

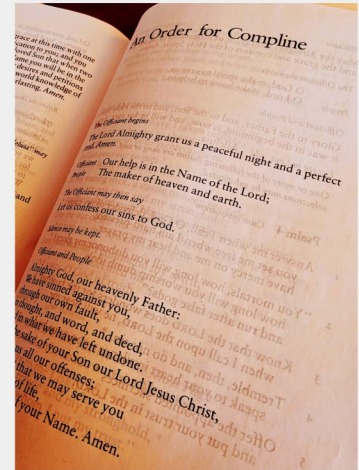
It will be the committees and their leaders, working with the priest and staff, who shape the direction of programming our church takes this coming year and beyond. The breakdown below sketches out what this will look like. Please be in touch with folks on the nominations team pastor Kyle, Sue, Ken, and Eddie, if you are interested in serving on the Vestry or as a part of these committees.

Committee	Description	Programs
<b>Worship</b>	Worship is the heart of what we do as a church. It focuses on the work of Sunday gatherings, and other programming that connects the congregation to God in a corporate way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sunday worship</li><li>• Altar Guild</li><li>• Annual Concerts</li><li>• Mid-week worship</li></ul>
<b>Discipleship</b>	Discipleship is focused on how we help empower individuals and families to grow in their faith. This includes Christian education, classes, and small groups that aim at helping people follow Jesus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adult Forum</li><li>• Seasonal Bible Studies</li><li>• Children's Sunday School</li><li>• Small groups</li></ul>
<b>Fellowship</b>	Fellowship is how we care for one another as a church. Focusing on ways we gather to know one another and strengthen our bonds as a community. This also includes how we welcome others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coffee hour</li><li>• Bereavement team</li><li>• Church events</li></ul>
<b>Outreach</b>	Outreach is how we as a church reach out to the community. This group asks the question, how are we blessing our neighbors and connecting with Orange County in loving ways?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Lunch</li><li>• Supporting local missions</li><li>• Book Giveaway</li><li>• Visibility in the Community</li></ul>

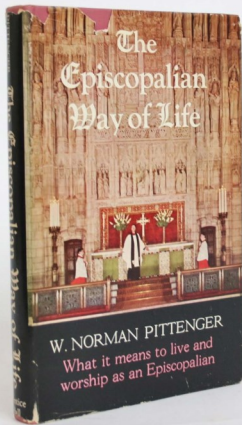
# Discipleship Offerings this Winter

### Offerings this Winter

This December on Wednesday nights we will be praying **Compline** together at 8:30 pm. Please join us online for this chance to slow down and rest in prayer together. The 45-minute program will include a chance to check in, a brief devotional, a time of silence, and of course, the Compline office as found in the prayerbook. If this program is well received we may continue a form of it during Lent as well. Please contact pastor Kyle or John in the office for the Zoom link and a free copy of the Book of Common Prayer if you need one.



Speaking of Lent, Ash Wednesday is February 14th and that evening will begin our **Lenten Wednesday night program**. This 6-week program will begin at 5:45 with Evening Prayer followed by dinner at 6 and a study on Prayer in the writings of Evelyn Underhill at 6:30. We will also have materials available for Stations of the Cross on Thursdays and invite folks to join the Wednesday ecumenical lunches at the Presbyterian church across the road from St. Thomas.



### Adult Forum

Sunday Mornings running roughly 9:05 - 10:05 am we will continue to host different studies. January 14 - February 18 Pastor Kyle will lead a 6-week study on **The Episcopal Way of Life** by Norman Pittenger. Written in 1957 but still incredibly relevant, this book is one of the best to look deeply at the unique gift of the Episcopal church and how we can encounter the world today. Copies will be available for purchase in the office and the book can be accessed online.

Beginning February 25 we will have six weeks of acolyte training for all ages that will culminate in March with an Instructional Eucharist. Please join us for these studies as you are able.

### Sunday School for Young People

We are still seeking volunteers and those interested in forming a plan for our Nursery and childcare opportunities including potentially restarting our Sunday school program. This act of hospitality will go a long way to welcome young families, so please let us know if you or someone you know is interested in assisting in these ways. Please contact Pastor Kyle for interest.





## Fellowship

### **A note from the Junior Warden**

In 2023 the following projects were completed. Some large, some small, all essential to the maintenance and upkeep of St. Thomas of Orange.

- ◇ Major repair and renovation was completed on the western entrance of the Parish Hall. Termite damage was remediated, a new door was installed, and tile was laid in the entryway.
- ◇ The sign that had deteriorated at the entrance of the lower parking lot was replaced.
- ◇ The french drains that allow for proper drainage of the church grounds were cleaned multiple times to ensure proper operation.
- ◇ The tree adjacent to the parish hall was trimmed.
- ◇ The choir room toilet was replaced.
- ◇ Joe Rowe day was reinstituted, with strong support from many volunteers for both the spring and autumn dates.
- ◇ The choir room AC was repaired.
- ◇ The chandelier lights in the nave were replaced with energy efficient LED bulbs, and the dimmer switch controlling those lights was replaced.
- ◇ The lawn was faithfully mowed, and string trimmed during the spring and summer months by the St. Thomas congregation.
- ◇ The boxwoods on grounds were carefully pruned, and had entangling ivy removed.
- ◇ Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers were tested and certified for the coming year.
- ◇ Wi-Fi and networking infrastructure in support of the Wi-Fi were set up.
- ◇ The parish hall walkway lights were put back in working order.
- ◇ The parish hall dishwasher was repaired.
- ◇ The church signpost out front was repainted, and the righted so that it no longer leans.
- ◇ Mulch was laid in the playground area making it safer for play, and the playground equipment was power washed.
- ◇ The prickly barberry that ran along the parish hall parking lot were removed.
- ◇ The hill along the eastern side of the breezeway that runs between the admin building and the church was beatified and stabilized with the addition of mulch and landscaping cloth underpinning it.

In the coming year I hope that we may undertake the following projects

- ◇ Make repairs to three sections of roof with water damage.
- ◇ Repair the masonry that has become damaged along many of our walkways.
- ◇ Repair the handrails along our walkways.
- ◇ Replace the damaged northern vestibule door.
- ◇ Repaint the admin building doors, windows, and trim.
- ◇ Create plans for response in the event of an emergency on church grounds.
- ◇ Expand Wi-Fi coverage in the church.
- ◇ Add the ability to stream church services.
- ◇ Expand teleconferencing capabilities from the parish hall.
- ◇ Replace two aging fluorescent light fixtures with LED alternatives.

## Outreach

### New Ministry Partners: Come To The Table

In November 2011, Sheltering Arms, a homeless shelter on Madison Rd. near the Health Department, closed its doors due to lack of funding. Feed My Sheep, a program to provide community meals usually one Saturday a month in Orange and Gordonsville was functioning at the time. Shortly after this, The Orange Community Church of Christ recognized the need to serve those with food insecurity in their neighborhood and began to offer simple lunches every Thursday. They named the outreach "Come To The Table".

This ministry continues to this day, has garnered community support from other local institutions, churches, and individuals, and serves around 50 meals each week. The doors open at 11:30a and lunch is served at 12:00n. Local faith leaders provide a devotional moment and prayer at the beginning of the meal.

The Orange Community Church of Christ has dwindled in recent years and decided to sell their property and settle their community in a different setting. Reynolds Automotive, a long-time benefactor of the ministry, has acquired the property and the church will vacate end of this year, 2023. The team of local volunteers who have been supporting the ministry began a search for a new host church, which led to St. Thomas considering taking on this role. In November our Vestry enthusiastically agreed to do so.

Since then key personnel have been discussing and planning what this will look like in our space, come our first offering on Wednesday, January 3rd. Several of our communicants have expressed excitement about this new beginning, some remembering our involvement with food ministry at the President Madison Inn and with Feed My Sheep. Marianne and I have volunteered to be the liaisons with the team and the St. Thomas community. We will coordinate with those who offer to provide the meal on a given Wednesday (there is a sign-up sheet that is nearly full for January) and oversee Wednesday's activities surrounding the lunch.

#### **There are several opportunities for St. Thomas to serve the outreach ministry:**

- ◇ **Come to lunch:** This is a free community lunch so just coming to eat and socialize anytime you want is encouraged; no reservations are required.
- ◇ **Help set up/serve:** Come sit at tables with guests, listen, pray, encourage, and help clean up, with no prior notice or ongoing commitment. We just incorporate anyone who shows up into what's happening. We start set-up at 11:00a and expect to wrap up by 1:15p.
- ◇ **Provide a meal:** From time-to-time, we will offer the congregation the opportunity to provide the meal itself; as the new host, we will be coordinating the provision of the first meal here on January 3rd. If you are interested in helping or have questions, please let us know.

## Movie Nights

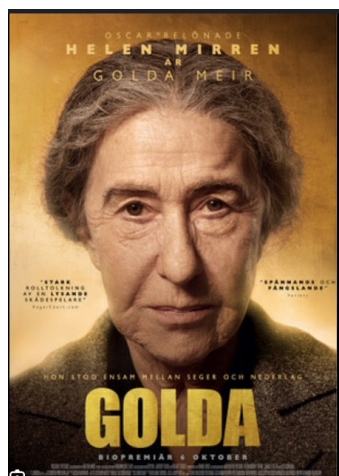
**December 22, 2023**



In 1843 London, author Charles Dickens finds himself in financial trouble after writing three unsuccessful novels in a row. Desperate for a hit, Dickens relies on real-life inspiration and his vivid imagination to bring Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim and other classic characters to life in "A Christmas Carol," forever changing the holiday season into the celebration known today. This film stars Dan Stevens as Charles Dickens, Christopher Plummer as Scrooge, Jonathan Price as John Dickens, and Donald Sumpter as Jacob Marley.

~ Wikipedia

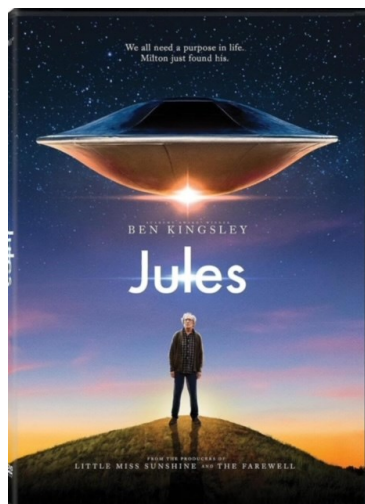
**January 2024**



Faced with the potential of Israel's complete destruction, Prime Minister Golda Meir must navigate overwhelming odds, a skeptical cabinet and a complex relationship with U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as millions of lives hang in the balance during the tense 19 days of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. **Golda** is a 2023 biographical drama film directed by Guy Nattiv and written by Nicholas Martin. It stars Helen Mirren, Camille Cottin, and Liev Schreiber.

~ Wikipedia

**February 2024**



Jules follows Milton (Ben Kingsley) who lives a quiet life of routine in a small western Pennsylvania town, but finds his day upended when a UFO and its extra-terrestrial passenger crash land in his backyard. Before long, Milton develops a close relationship with the extra-terrestrial he calls "Jules." Things become complicated when two neighbors (Harriet Sansom Harris and Jane Curtin) discover Jules and the government quickly closes in. What follows is a funny, wildly inventive ride as the three neighbors find meaning and connection later in life -- thanks to this unlikely stranger. ~ Rotten Tomatoes

**St. Thomas Episcopal Church**  
**119 Caroline Street**  
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